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TAGS: [KSCA](#) [TPHY](#) [TSPA](#) [TSPL](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: NASA LETTER TO CNSA ON POTENTIAL SPACE AND EARTH
SCIENCE WORKING GROUPS

11. (SBU) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. SEE PARAGRAPH 3 BELOW.

12. (SBU) BACKGROUND

1A. FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) IN SEPTEMBER 2006, THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA) ADVISED THE PRESIDENT OF NASA'S DESIRE TO ESTABLISH TWO WORKING GROUPS WITH THE CHINA NATIONAL SPACE ADMINISTRATION (CNSA) TO EXPLORE AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST RELATED TO EARTH SCIENCE AND SPACE SCIENCE. SINCE THAT TIME, THERE HAVE BEEN NO BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO AGENCIES, OTHER THAN AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS AT THE END OF 2007, IN WHICH MUTUAL INTEREST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WORKING GROUPS WAS CONFIRMED.

1B. INTERAGENCY DISCUSSIONS ON POTENTIAL NASA ENGAGEMENT WITH CNSA HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY SINCE MARCH 2008. THESE DISCUSSIONS CULMINATED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES, INCLUDING SECURITY AND COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, UNDER WHICH NASA, IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, WILL ENGAGE CNSA, THROUGH THE SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUPS, TO EXPLORE POTENTIAL AREAS OF SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION. THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS ENGAGEMENT WILL BE TO ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOR CONSISTENT WITH THE RESPONSIBLE STAKEHOLDER ROLE WE SUPPORT FOR THE PRC, INCLUDING GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND INSIGHT INTO THE PRC'S SPACE ACTIVITIES. A COMPLEMENTARY GOAL WILL BE TO ADVANCE U.S. SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING IN EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

1C. THE NEAR-TERM OBJECTIVE OF THE SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUPS WILL BE TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN NASA AND CNSA. THE INTERAGENCY WILL APPROVE OF SPECIFIC COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OR INFORMATION EXCHANGES.

1D. IN COMPLIANCE WITH RELEVANT EXPORT CONTROL LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES, NO ITAR-CONTROLLED DEFENSE ARTICLES, INCLUDING TECHNICAL DATA, OR DEFENSE SERVICES WILL BE TRANSFERRED OR PROVIDED TO PRC ENTITIES AS PART OF EITHER THE INITIAL EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS OR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT.

13. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST FOR BEIJING.

1A. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO DELIVER A LETTER FROM MICHAEL 1F. O'BRIEN, NASA ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS, TO MR. LUO GE, VICE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CHINA NATIONAL SPACE ADMINISTRATION. THE TEXT OF THE LETTER, THE SIGNED ORIGINAL OF WHICH IS TO BE PROVIDED TO THE EMBASSY ON NASA LETTERHEAD VIA SECURE E-MAIL, IS EMBEDDED BELOW.

BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER

Mr. Luo Ge
Vice Administrator
China National Space Administration
8A, Fucheng Road
Haidian District
Beijing, 100037
People's Republic of China

Dear Mr. Luo:

Thank you for your December 17, 2007, invitation to visit China and begin discussions on the formulation of Earth and space science working groups between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the China National Space Administration (CNSA). We would be pleased to accept the invitation for a NASA delegation to visit China, hopefully as early as June 2008.

From our perspective, potentially useful discussions in the area of Earth science might include such topics as access to global measurements from ocean-observing satellites; data exchanges related to aerosol robotic network ground stations; and activities related to existing geodetic networks. Discussions on space science activities might include data exchanges related to robotic lunar and planetary exploration, astrophysics, and heliophysics missions; collaborative research and data analyses; and an invitation to researchers from China, along with other potential international partners, to study the creation of a network of science instruments on the lunar surface.

I propose that we further discuss the logistics and timing for the visit by telephone. Upon receipt of your reply, Mr. Kent Bress of my office will contact Mr. Xu Yansong to arrange this call.

Sincerely,

Michael F. O'Brien
Assistant Administrator
for External Relations

END TEXT OF LETTER

1B. (SBU) TALKING POINTS TO ACCOMPANY DELIVERY OF THE NASA LETTER:

-- THE UNITED STATES IS PLEASED TO ACCEPT CHINA'S INVITATION TO BEGIN EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS ON POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS IN THE AREAS OF EARTH SCIENCE AND SPACE SCIENCE.

-- THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY, RECIPROCITY, AND MUTUAL BENEFIT WILL GUIDE ALL OF THE U.S. NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION'S INTERACTIONS WITH THE CHINESE NATIONAL SPACE AGENCY. THESE PRINCIPLES ALSO GUIDE ALL OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT CIVIL SPACE COOPERATION WITH CHINA. POSSIBLE ENGAGEMENT WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH KEY INTERNATIONAL AND U.S. NONPROLIFERATION AND EXPORT CONTROL REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES.

-- WE WILL ALSO BE EXPECTING GREATER TRANSPARENCY REGARDING THE FULL RANGE OF CHINA'S SPACE ACTIVITIES AS WE CONSIDER NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARTH SCIENCE AND SPACE SCIENCE COOPERATION.

1C. (SBU) ANY FEEDBACK REGARDING CNSA'S IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO THE LETTER OR ANY SUBSEQUENT ANALYSIS OF THEIR REACTION SHOULD BE PROVIDED VIA CABLE TO SECSTATE WASHDC AND THROUGH SIPRNET TO THE NASA OFFICE OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS (JOHN.HALL@NSS.SGOV.GOV), STATE-OES/SAT (TURNERDA@STATE.SGOV.GOV), STATE-EAP/CM (HIGGINSJX@STATE.SGOV.GOV), STATE-ISN/MDSP (BUENNEKERH@STATE.SGOV.GOV), AND STATE-T (KATSAPISE@STATE.SGOV.GOV).

1D. (SBU) UPON RECEIPT OF AFFIRMATIVE CNSA REPLY, NASA AND CNSA WILL COORDINATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR WORKING GROUP MEETINGS. ONCE THESE ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE, NASA WILL INITIATE NOTIFICATIONS TO CONGRESS AND FOREIGN CIVIL SPACE AGENCY PARTNERS. IN PARALLEL, STATE-ISN/MDSP WILL NOTIFY THE GOVERNMENTS OF ALLIES WITH WHOM IT CONSULTS ON SPACE SECURITY ISSUES. IN THE MEANTIME, COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MEDIA REGARDING THIS SUBJECT SHOULD BE AVOIDED, AND UNSOLICITED INQUIRIES REGARDING POTENTIAL NASA COOPERATION WITH CNSA

SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE NASA OFFICE OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS
(NASA OER) .

END CABLE TEXT
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